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NEXT STEP

INTERNSHIPS CALM (?) BEFORE THE STORM



ILLUSTRATION: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

Most organisations in Bangladesh don't have a comprehensive plan for internship programmes either, making matters worse. More often than not, interns end up running errands for line managers who gladly pass on all the tedious work, terming them as 'part of the corporate experience'. However, there's still a lot to be learnt if you genuinely put in the time and effort. Here are seven things you should keep in mind in order to make your internship experience more than just filler material for your CV.

1. Don't join the rat race
Don't take up an internship just because everyone else is doing it. For entry positions, a lot of reputed companies don't care whether you have previous work experience or not. Peer pressure will only end up wasting your time in this case. Shreya Saha, who worked as an intern for Analyzen, says, "My advice is, never go with the flow. Find something you are genuinely interested in while pursuing your internship".

2. Make up your mind
The general perception in Bangladesh is

the smaller the organisation, the more you get to learn from an internship stint. While a startup might help you more in developing your skill sets, a big brand does look good on your CV. It is very important to make up your mind as to what you want because an internship is an expensive time investment and if you are caught in the middle, you might lose motivation and regret your decision in the middle of the stint.

3. Set priorities
We start off with maxed-out motivation levels, but in just a couple of days, most of that drains away because let's face it, working after class is not fun. However, skipping work days or missing deadlines without any legitimate reason creates a negative impression about yourself and your university on the employer's mind. This might seem harmless, but word spreads fast and it can come back to haunt you during future recruitments.

4. Ask loads of questions
Even though interns are here to learn, most

of us try to stay within our comfort zone and avoid tasks we know little about. However, asking relevant questions to understand the ins and outs of completing a particular task never hurts. "No matter how stupid the question is, ask and try to learn as much as possible. People will appreciate the hunger to learn", says Syed Ibrahim Saajid, a pricing strategist at Grameenphone.

5. Create your network
This is something you will find in every article ever written about internships. Don't just stick to your 'intern group' or people within your department. Talk to as many individuals as possible without stepping on their toes because when you are looking for a full-time job, you never know where the opportunity might come from. Most people consider this to be the biggest perk of an internship and rightfully so.

6. Take risks
You will not be spoon-fed in a corporate setting. Mistakes will cross your path every now and then, but it's all part of the learning experience. Sabira Mehrin, who is

Internships are meant to give us a firsthand taste of the famous 'corporate culture' that everyone speaks of. They give us a platform to apply our theoretical knowledge in practical business scenarios and figure out our strengths and weaknesses. Yet, most of us take internships for granted and often end up loitering around the workplace, doing nothing (eating subsidised food does not count).

a Management Associate at Telenor Health says, "Internships help you to step into the work culture. Embrace trial and error to sharpen your skills and identify your capabilities during this period. Make sure you understand your strengths and work on your weaknesses while being an intern".

7. Be honest
If you have irregular class timings, be open about it even before you get hired. If your best friend is leaving for the States, be honest about it and tell your boss that you won't be able to make it. Don't pretend you know Photoshop or any other skill unless you actually do, because eventually you will get caught. Remember, these guys have heard it all and can see through your excuses. Being honest will never hurt you, unless of course, your reason is "I am lazy".

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THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



6 FREE APPS TO TURN TO DURING BREAK TIME



Is your default downtime activity at work mindlessly scrolling through Facebook? But how about using what little time you have left over between meetings or projects to maybe improve yourself, or even your career?

1. Learn something new with Blinkist
In this ever-changing world, it helps to stay on top of the newest ideas and trends. Easier said than done, right? Well, Blinkist makes this possible by offering you 15-minute summaries of bestselling non-fiction. With over 2,000 titles and an audio option, this app is a fast and easy way to get new perspectives and insights that you can then use to improve your own work.

2. Keep yourself alert with 100 Office Workouts
Need a better way to get through the mid-afternoon slump? Research shows that even a little physical activity can make you much more alert and effective. 100 Office Workouts gives you a huge collection of simple routines to perk you up, without having to take a trip to the gym. Each workout's designed to be done without equipment and in an office environment, so you can skip the caffeine overdose and still be ready to tackle the rest of your day.

3. Do some journaling with Daylio
For many people, journaling's the best way to start or end the day—whether you need to vent, record inspirations, or track your goals. Well, journaling can help you at work, too. With just a few clicks in the Daylio app, you can record your activity and mood, and you can even do a little "venting" by taking notes on your day. And, you can review your patterns to see how to improve your schedule for less stressful and more fulfilling days.

4. Build a healthy habit with StepBet
Finding time to stay in shape is a struggle we all face. But, we also all know that it would probably make us feel (and work) better to get some exercise. StepBet encourages this healthy habit by letting you bet on yourself meeting your fitness goals. The app sets daily and weekly challenging (but doable) step amounts for you, and tracks your progress.

5. Plan your next vacation with Trip.com
You know how the saying goes: All work and no play... Not to mention, taking some time off can make you a better employee. So, stop feeling guilty about your getaway fantasies and start planning your next vacation with Trip.com. You'll get recommendations based on your interests so you can find the perfect hotels, restaurants, and locations to visit. And, the app lets you easily compare prices, check reviews, and share your experiences.

6. Improve your mood with Bored Panda
Believe it or not, randomly wandering through your Facebook feed can kill your productivity (and sometimes your confidence), but cute cat photos—according to science—can actually improve your effectiveness at work. My favourite source of adorable animals (and plenty of other photo pick-me-ups) is the Bored Panda site app. It's a huge collection of funny and interesting photos and stories from all around the world that'll help you forget all about that frustrating meeting you just finished.

Making a DIFFERENCE

REVERSE ENGINEER YOUR WAY OUT OF WORK MISERY



If you can't seem to set goals even if your life depended on it, and you think it's getting in the way of a fulfilling work experience, do not despair. Turns out you are in the same boat as Warren Buffett and his business partner Charlie Munger.

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

According to Buffet, the duo never learned how to solve difficult business problems, just how to avoid them. Or as Munger related at an investors meeting in 2000, "A lot of success in life and business comes from knowing what you want to avoid: early death, a bad marriage, etc."

Inspired by Buffett and Munger, tech entrepreneurs Andrew Wilkinson and his partner Chris Sparling decided to identify the aspects of the work experience they least liked—what they call "anti-goals":

- Full of long meetings
- A packed calendar
- Dealing with people we don't like or trust
- Owing people things/not being in control/obligations

Then they figured out ways to avoid them:

- Never schedule an in-person meeting when it can otherwise be accomplished via email or phone (or not at all)
- No more than two hours of scheduled time per day
- No business or obligations with people we don't like—even just a slight bad vibe and it's a hard no
- Never give up voting control of our businesses, no favours from people who could need something from us

It might seem like it's easy to set the terms when you're your own boss, but we have more control over our workday than we realise. You might not be able to avoid all workplace unpleasantness, but devising strategies to avoid what's within your control works. But if it turns out your day is jam-packed with anti-goals you can do nothing about, it might be time to set the goal of finding a new job

AMIYA HALDER

Amiya is In-charge of the career publication of The Daily Star.